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PRIMARY RECITATIONS

SHORT, BRIGHT SELECTIONS

FOR

THANKSGIVING

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY ARBOR DAY

MAY DAY BIRD DAY

MEMORIAL DAY FLAG DAY

CLOSING EXERCISES

NATURE RECITATIONS

PATRIOTIC AND GENERAL OCCASIONS

FOR CHILDREN OF SEVEN YEARS

PHILADELPHIA

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1924

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NOTE.

Many of the verses gathered into this little volume were written for *The Primary School.* They are distinguished from the other selections by the name of the author following directly under the title.

Thanks are due Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, of New York, for permission to use poems by Robert Louis Stevenson, Eugene Field, and Mrs. Julia C. R. Dorr; to Mrs. Alice W. Rollins for selections from her volume, "Little Page Fern"; Houghton, Mifflin & Co., of Boston, for Poems by Alice and Phœbe Cary; and to the publishers of *The Outlook*, of New York, *The Youth's Companion*, of Boston, and *The Independent*, of New York, for verses contributed to their pages.

Although a considerable proportion of the recitations included in this collection are suitable for special day exercises, additional ones for these occasions will be found in the different numbers of our series of "Special Day Books": "How to Celebrate Washington's Birthday," "How to Celebrate Arbor Day," "How to Celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas," "New Year and Midwinter Exercises," "Spring and Summer School Celebrations," "Authors' Birthdays" Nos. 1 and 2, and "Christmas Entertainment."

Primary Recitations.

Welcome.

By Alice E. Allen.

(To be used as an opening piece on a program of primary exercises.)

Which is the sweetest of words you may hear?
"Love" touches all hearts, and "Home" is most dear.
Children choose "Christmas," the weary love "Rest";
But "Welcome" of all is the sweetest and best!
As violets greet Maytime, as stars greet the night,
As birds sing in chorus to welcome the light,
So, with smiles and with music, sweet greeting we call,
And welcome you gladly, dear friends, each and all!

The American Flag.

By Lena E. Faulds.

(A recitation for a flag-raising.)

Lift it high, our glorious banner;
Let it wave upon the breeze;
Freedom's starry emblem ever,
Lift it high o'er land and seas.

Many conflicts it has witnessed,
  Many stories it could tell
Of the brave who fought around it,
  Of the brave who 'neath it fell.

Scenes of woe and desolation,
  Scenes of joy o'er vict'ries won;
Scenes of rest and peaceful union;
  Freedom now for every one.

Lift the flag, then, high above us,
  May it wave till time shall cease,
And its record for the future
  Be of happiness and peace!

The Best Kind to Plant.

By L. F. Armitage.

(To be recited by a boy on Arbor Day.)

"Yes, Jack, my boy, we'll plant a tree,
  We'll set it out with care,
And you shall choose it. Shall it be
  A walnut, spruce, or pear?"

"Now whether birch or elm," said Jack,
  "I do not care a dime;
The kind of tree *I* want to plant
  Is one that's good to climb!"

Our Nation's Dead.

By Susie M. Best.

(A recitation for Memorial Day.)

All over our fair land to-day
The grateful people pause and say,
"We'll gather all earth's fairest blooms
To decorate the soldiers' tombs;
For well indeed our bosoms know
The debt of gratitude we owe
To those who ventured limb and life
When war in all the land was rife."

To-day all over our fair land
The people dwell, a peace-blessed band;
From bound to bound, in home and hall,
One honored flag waves over all!
For this we bless our nation's dead,
And, as we reverently tread
Besides their graves, we place with care
Love's fadeless laurels everywhere!

The Robin's Secret.

(Give this recitation prominence in the exercises for Bird Day.)

I'm a Robin Redbreast,
My nest is in the tree;
If you look up in yonder elm,
My pleasant home you'll see.
We've made it very soft and nice—
My pretty mate and I—
And all the time we worked at it
We sang most merrily.

I have a secret I would like
The little girls to know;
But do not tell a single boy,
They rob the poor birds so.
Within our pretty little nest,
Arranged with loving care,
Are five sweet speckled little eggs—
Don't tell the boys they're there!

Winter Jewels.

(One speaker may recite these lines, and four other children, standing in a semi-circle on the platform, accompanying her with appropriate hand-gestures.)

A million little diamonds
Twinkled on the trees,
And all the little maidens said,
"A jewel, if you please!"
But while they held their hands outstretched
To catch the diamonds gay,
A million little sunbeams came
And stole them all away.

The New Cook.

By Myra S. Pitkin.

(An imitation of the Irish speech must be attempted by the speaker.)

She was only two weeks from Ireland,
Ignorant as she could be,
But she seemed good-natured and willing,
And I thought we could agree.

So I took her into the kitchen—
To her everything was strange:
She didn't know how to work the pump,
She never had seen a range.

As it happened 'twas baking morning,
I thought that I could but try
To teach her how civilized beings
Could make huckleberry-pie.

I showed her each step of the process,
Doing all the work myself,
From sifting the flour to putting
The pies away on the shelf.

Then placing a turnover dainty
In the oven for our Bess,
I said, "Watch that turnover, Bridget,
While I go and change my dress."

I returned and found her still sitting
By the open oven door;
And straight upon my innocent head
Her wrath she began to pour.

"It's mesilf that thinks you're too mane, mum,
For fooling a poor girl so,
An' me jist come over from Ireland,
An' no other place to go.

"I've been settin' by your rid-hot stove,—
I didn't so much as wink,—
An' you've been gone an hour by the clock,
An' I'm nearly dead, I think.

" An' watchin' I've bin your wee shmall pie
As clost, mum, as I could get,
But as shure as me name's Bridget McGinnis,
It hasn't turned over yet ! "

Our Flag.

By M. D. STERLING.

(A recitation for Flag Day or any patriotic occasion. The speaker holds a flag.)

You may talk about the countries
That lie beyond the sea,
But America's the country
That's good enough for me !

The stars and stripes ! The stars and stripes !
Oh ! that's the flag I love. (*Waves a flag.*)
Long may we see it proudly float
Our schools and homes above.

Our country ! It shall ever be
More dear to me than any other—
A home for all that are oppressed,
Where the rich man to the poor is brother.

Red, white, and blue is our country's flag—
The flag of the brave and free;
Red, white, and blue, wherever we go,
Is the flag for you and me.
(*The chorus to " Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," is started as the speaker leaves the platform.*)

What Would You Do?

Now if you should visit a Japanese home,
Where there isn't a sofa or chair,
And your hostess should say, "Take a seat, sir, I pray,"
Now, where would you sit? Tell me where.

And should they persuade you to stay there and dine,
Where knives, forks, and spoons are unknown,
Do you think that you *could* eat with chopsticks of wood,
And how might you pick up a bone?

And then, should they take you a Japanese drive
In a neat little "rickshaw" of blue,
And you found, in Japan, that your horse was a man,
Now, what do you think you would do?
—*Mary McNeil Scott in "The Independent."*

Japanese Lullaby.

(Give the effect of a Japanese interior to the platform with screens, mats, wall-scrolls, and fans. Fasten up a hammock and lay a large doll in it. Select a little girl with dark eyes and hair to give the recitation. Pin her hair high on her head and run through it two wooden knitting-needles, and dress her in a Japanese gown with a wide sash. She swings the hammock gently at the close of each verse.)

Sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—
Little blue pigeon with velvet eyes;
Sleep to the singing of mother-bird swinging—
Swinging the nest where her little one lies.

Away out yonder I see a star,—
Silvery star with a twinkling song:
To the soft dew falling I hear it calling—
Calling and tinkling the night along.

In through the window a moonbeam comes,—
Little gold moonbeam with misty wings;
All silently creeping, it asks "Is he sleeping—
Sleeping and dreaming while mother sings?"

But sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—
Little blue pigeon with mournful eyes;
Am I not swinging?—see, I am swinging—
Swinging the nest where my darling lies.

—*Eugene Field.*

Hepaticas.

(To be recited on May-Day displaying a bunch of hepaticas.)

So cold it is, the violet ne'er ventures out or stirs;
But hepaticas come fearlessly, wrapped in their
dainty furs. —*Alice W. Rollins.*

The Acorn.

By Grace O. Kyle.

(The speaker holds an acorn in his hand.)

I am an acorn bold.
I live in the oak tree old.
I can fall to the earth
Which gave me birth,
Or into your hand
If beneath me you stand.

Be Kind.

By Dora Donn.

Suppose there were a telephone,
With which to reach the ear
Of all school-children in the world,
And surely make them hear,
This little message I would send
To every youthful mind:
Whate'er their rank or place in life,
To every one be kind.

Oh ! heed this message, boys and girls,
In school, or at your play:
Be kind in everything you do,
Be kind, in all you say,
For kindly deeds and kindly words
Denote a noble mind,
And kindliness will make all grow
More gentle and refined.

A Dream.

A little boy was dreaming
Upon his mother's lap,
That the pins fell out of all the stars,
And the stars fell into his cap.

So when his dream was over,
What should that little boy do ?
Why, he went and looked into his cap
And found it wasn't true.

The Reason.

By M. Eloise Jones.

When Rachel and Jesse are both at play
Everything runs in the smoothest way;
Each dear little face is sunny and sweet,—
Watching them play is a pleasant treat.

For they never quarrel or disagree,
Nor snatch the playthings, nor come to me
With tiresome complaints that make me sorry,
As do their cousins Kate and Florrie.

I was thinking what the reason could be—
Although they're the sweetest girls I see;
So I called them up to make the case plain,
And asked them the puzzle to explain.

And Jessie looked red and shook her shy head,
While our wise little Rachel quickly said,
Smilingly droll, "I think it must be
'Cause I let Jessie, and Jessie lets me!"

The Cat And The Bird.

Little Robin Redbreast sat upon a tree,
Up went Pussy-cat, and down went he;
Down came Pussy-cat, and away Robin ran:
Says little Robin Redbreast, "Catch me if you can!"
Little Robin Redbreast hopped upon a wall,
Pussy-cat jumped after him, and almost got a fall.
Robin chirped and sang, and what did Pussy say?
Pussy-cat said, "Mew!" and Robin flew away.

Strength.

Who says " I will " to what is right,
" I won't " to what is wrong,
Although a tender little child,
Is truly great and strong.
—*Anna M. Pratt in " The Youth's Companion."*

Invitation.

(To be used on an Arbor Day program preceding a trip to the woods.)

Come to the forest woodland,
The woodland sweet and wild,
Come to the forest woodland
And be again a child.
There with the buds and flowers
The butterflies and bees,
Wander in shadowy bowers
Made by the whispering trees.

The Naughty Doll.

(On a table upon the platform place a Dresden vase and a drum. The speaker points to these, while clasping a doll in her arms.)

My dolly is a dreadful care—
Her name is Miss Amandy;
I dress her up and curl her hair,
And feed her taffy candy.
Yet, heedless of the pleading voice
Of her devoted mother,
She will not wed her mother's choice,
But says she'll wed another.

I'd have her wed the china vase,
  There is no Dresden rarer;
You might go searching every place
  And never find a fairer.
He is a gentle, pinkish youth,
  Of that there's no denying;
Yet when I speak of him, forsooth!
  Amandy falls to crying.

She loves the drum,—that's very plain,—
  And scorns the vase so clever,
And, weeping, vows she will remain
  A spinister doll forever!
The protestations of the drum
  I am convinced are hollow;
When once distressing times should come,
  How soon would ruin follow!

Yet all in vain the Dresden boy
  From yonder mantel woos her;
A mania for that vulgar toy,
  The noisy drum, imbues her.
In vain I wheel her to and fro,
  And reason with her mildy;
Her waxen tears in torrents flow,
  Her sawdust heart beats wildly.

I'm sure that when I'm big and tall
  And wear long trailing dresses,
I shan't encourage beaux at all
  Till mamma acquiesces;
Our choice will be a suitor then
  As pretty as this vase is,—
Oh, how we'll hate the noisy men
  With whiskers on their faces!

—*Eugene Field.*

A Woodland Baby.

(A recitation for May-day exercises.)

Little Curlyhead, tucked in tight
Under a blanket snowy white,
Softly cuddled all in a heap,
Lay till springtime fast asleep.
Wake-robin called close to her ear,
" Get up, Curlyhead ! May-day is here."
So out she peeped, dear little thing,
Bonny Baby Fern, round as a ring !

—*Elizabeth H. Thomas in "The Youth's Companion."*

The Thanksgiving Feast.

By Susie M. Best.

On Thanksgiving 'tis the custom
To prepare a splendid feast,
And we all look forward to it
From the greatest to the least !

Cook and mother in the kitchen
Make the most delicious things,
Pumpkin-pies and lots of doughnuts,
Round and square and cut like rings.

In the pot the big plum-pudding,
Full of raisins and of spice,
Simmers in the boiling water
Till it's cooked enough to slice.

Pickles, celery, and jelly—
All of these you'll find if you
Look for them, for in the pantry
On the shelves they're full in view.

From the heated baking-oven,
Every time the door is down,
Steals the warm, delicious odor
Of the turkey turning brown !

Oh, I tell you we are hungry
When at last we're called to eat,
And we all do ample justice
To the good things sour and sweet.

Jack Frost.

(One child asks the question in the first line ; a second child replies and both run off the platform at the end.)

Where do you live, Jack Frost ?
In the wind when the trees are tossed,
In the ice when the river is crossed,
In the snow when the sheep are lost,
And in your little cold nose !

The Story of Peterkin Paul.

By Susie M. Best.

There was once a boy named Peterkin Paul,
Who was not very big nor yet very small.
He had plenty to eat and plenty to wear,
But Peterkin Paul was as cross as a bear !

Nothing he had pleased Peterkin Paul,
He vowed he never was happy at all;
His mates when they saw him all hurried away,
For with Peterkin Paul none wanted to play !

You see, he was snappish, was Peterkin Paul.
If the boys wanted cricket, why, *he* wanted *ball*,
And the other way round, for I tell you that he
Was just as contrary as contrary could be !

But a day came when Peterkin Paul fell quite sick,
And Death on the heals of his illness came quick,
And mighty few sorrowed, and mighty few cried,
And some even said, it was good that he died.

Now, boys, let us not be like Peterkin Paul,
Be we young boys or old boys, or short boys or tall;
For if we are like him there's none will deny,
Unloved we will live, and unmourned we will die !

A Summer Song.

(These verses may be distributed among four children, if too long for one child to memorize.)

Roly-poly, honey-bee,
Humming in the clover,
Under you the tossing leaves,
And the blue sky over.
Why are you so busy, pray ?
Never still a minute,
Hovering now above a flower,
Now half buried in it !

Jaunty robin redbreast,
Singing loud and cheerly,
From the pink-white apple-tree
In the morning early,

Tell me, is your early song
Just for your own pleasure,
Poured from such a tiny throat,
Without stint or measure ?

Little yellow buttercup,
By the wayside smiling,
Lifting up your happy face,
With such sweet beguiling,
Why are you so gayly clad—
Cloth of gold your raiment ?
Do the sunshine and the dew
Look to you for payment ?

Roses in the garden-beds,
Lilies cool and saintly,
Darling blue-eyed violets,
Pansies, hooded quaintly,
Sweet-peas that, like butterflies,
Dance the bright skies under,
Bloom ye for your own delight,
Or for ours, I wonder ?

—*Julia C. R. Dorr.*

The Wind.

The wind one morning sprang up from sleep,
Saying, " Now for a frolic, now for a leap !
Now for a madcap galloping chase !
I'll make a commotion in every place."

The Hickory Nut.

By Grace O. Kyle.

I am a hickory-nut,
And a figure forlorn I cut,
For my overcoat is lost!
'Twas taken by Jack Frost,
When I came dancing down—
You see my pointed crown.

School Greeting.

By G. Scott.

(A recitation for the closing of school.)

I greet you now, my schoolmates dear,
With best of wishes and loving cheer;
With peace and love within my heart,
I bid you share my joy to part.

Our holidays have come at last,—
I hope they will not go too fast,
But that each day will bring you joy
And happiness without alloy.

Now that our study-time is past,
We'll run, and play, and grow so fast,
That when our school begins once more
We'll study better than before.

When playing mid the summer flowers,
We'll not forget our schoolday hours;
I hope to meet you, one and all,
When school commences in the fall.

The Swallow.

(These lines may be recited by one of the very youngest pupils upon Bird Day or Arbor Day.)

The swallow is come!
The swallow is come!
Oh, fair are the seasons and light
Are the days that she brings,
With her dusky wings,
And her bosom so snowy and white!

Putting the World to Bed.

(Before reciting this little winter poem, the speaker should give the title distinctly.)

The little Snow-people are hurrying down
From their home in the clouds overhead.
They are working as hard as ever they can,
Putting the world to bed.

Every tree in a soft fleecy nightgown they clothe,
Each post has its nightcap of white,
And o'er the cold ground a thick cover they spread
Before they say good-night.

And so they come eagerly sliding down
With a swift and silent tread,
Always as busy as busy can be,
Putting the world to bed.

—*Esther W. Buxton in "The Outlook."*

A Ballad of the War.

By F. H. Stauffer.

Two little chaps with paper caps,
  Flags flying and drum beating
A charge across the meadow made
  Where flocks of geese were eating.

The geese at this set up a hiss,
  The soldier chaps sought cover,
Quite out of breath and sadly scared,—
  The cruel war was over!

Violets in Spring.

(The first two lines may be asked by one child, the rest given in response by a second child holding a basket of violets.)

O wind, where have you been,
  That you blow so sweet?
Among the violets
  Which blossom at your feet.

The honeysuckle waits
  For summer and for heat;
But violets in the chilly spring
  Make the turf so sweet.

—*Christina Rossetti.*

The Price of Greatness.

By Carrie Van Gilder.

(As the last line is spoken a slate is held up for inspection.)

They say that Washington's copy-books
  Were kept so neat and clean
That his mother always preserved them.
  And now they may be seen

At his old home at Mount Vernon.
Oh, dear ! if it takes that to be great
I fear I shall fall a long way behind;
Just see this untidy slate !

Falling Snow.

(Accompany this recitation with finger exercise.)

See the pretty snowflakes
Falling from the sky;
On the wall and house-tops
Soft and thick they lie.

On the window-ledges,
On the branches bare,
Now how fast they gather,
Filling all the air.

Look into the garden
Where the grass was green,
Covered by the snowflakes,
Not a blade is seen.

Now the bare black bushes
All look soft and white,
Every twig is laden,—
What a pretty sight !

Going a-Nutting.

By Jennie D. Moore.

(A recitation for October or November.)

Going a-nutting,
Oh, what fun !
None shall escape us,
No, not one.

Going a-nutting
The wind blows free,
And down come the nuts
From the great, tall tree.

We'll fill our pockets,
Yes, every one.
In the woods a-nutting,
Oh, what fun !

We'll take them home,
And eat them there,
Each boy can have
A good big share.

The woods are yellow
And sere and brown,
In the dry, dead leaves
The nuts drop down.

Going a-nutting,
What rare delight !
When the wind blows free
And the sun shines bright.

A Joke.

The man in the wilderness asked me
How many strawberries grew in the sea ?
I answered him, as I thought good,
As many red herrings as grew in the wood.

Put it Off.

By Susie M. Best.

Put it off till to-morrow, that bad, bitter thought;
Don't think it to-day, for sad ruin is wrought,
Often and often, by nursing to-day
The thoughts that to-morrow we'd banish away.

Put it off till to-morrow, that hot angry speech;
Don't say it to-day; if you do it may reach
And stab, as a venom-tipped arrow might do,
Some heart that has only fond feelings for you.

Put it off till to-morrow, that cold, cruel deed;
Don't do it to-day, for some one may need
More sadly, perhaps, than you ever can know,
The tenderest kindness that you can bestow.

Put them off till to-morrow, those things that are mean;
Don't do them to-day, let a night intervene,
In the calm of reflection resentment will cease,
And your bosom will harbor but white-winged peace.

The Daisy.

By C. Phillips.

(Dress a little girl in a dark-green muslin gown with a close cap of green tissue-paper, long white petals turning back from the face, with a fringe of yellow inside.)

I'm only a little daisy,
A flower of low degree,
Just peeping above the grasses
On hillside and on lea.

I'm only a golden circlet,
With petals as white as snow,
A-nodding my head to the violet
So deep in the grass below.

I'm only a little wild-flower,
But cultured by hand divine;
I care not for another power,
The blessings of Heaven are mine.

Bed in Summer.

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should love so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day ?

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

The Owl.

The little brown owl sits up in the tree,
And if you look well his big eyes you may see.
He says *Whit-a-whoo* when the night grows dark,
And he hears the dog howl and the little fox bark.

April.

By William Z. Gladwin.

A smile and a tear
In the spring of the year,
A smile for the summer that's coming;
With bird-thrills and flowers,
And long sunny hours,
And music of wings softly humming.

A smile and a tear
In the spring of the year,
A tear for the winter that's going;
With dull-colored sky,
And snowflakes that fly,
And blasts from the northland blowing.

What the Birds Say.

(A recitation for Bird Day.)

Do you ask what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,
The linnet, and thrush say, "I love and I love!"
In the winter they're silent, the wind is so strong;
What it says I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny, warm weather,
And singing and loving all come back together;
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings, and forever sings he,
"I love my Love, and my Love loves me!"

—*Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

Winter.

By Susie M. Best.

It is winter now, for sure and certain.
See, on the window, like a curtain,
Old Jack Frost has stamped with ease
Beautiful web-like traceries.

Hill and hollow and dale and mountain,
Flowing river and gushing fountain,
Every one he has pictured there,
Like an artist, on the glassy square.

It is winter now, and the sad sun tires,
He hides in the south his tropic fires;
Out of the clouds the soft snows fall.
And cover the world like a spotless pall.

It is winter now, and the winds are bitter;
From the eaves and the walls icicles glitter,
And the leafless trees like grim ghosts stand,
Gaunt and bare in the blighted land.

Wonderland.

Wonderland is here and there;
Wonderland is everywhere;
Fly not then to east or west.
On some far, uncertain quest.

Seek not India nor Japan,
Nor the city Ispahan,
Where to-day the shadows brood
Over lonely Zendarood.

Somewhere smileth far Cathay
Through the long resplendant day;
Somewhere, moored in purple seas,
Sleep the fair Hesperides.

Somewhere, in vague realms remote
Over which strange banners float,
Lies, all bathed in silver gleams,
The dear Wonderland of dreams.

Yet no need to sail in ships
Where the blue sea dips and dips,
Nor on wings of cloud to fly
Where the haunts of faery lie.

For by miracle of morn
Each successive day is born;
And wherever shines the sun,
There enchanted rivers run!

Would you go to Wonderland?
Lo! it lieth close at hand;
Wonderland is wheresoe'er
Eyes can see and ears can hear!

—*Julia C. R. Dorr.*

Flowers For Memorial Day.

By C. PHILLIPS.

(Recitation to precede the decoration of soldiers' graves.)

We love the flowers, the little flowers
So beautiful and bright;
They come to cheer our dreary hours,
They come for our delight.

We love their rich and varied hues,
Their forms and perfumes sweet;
We love to think 'tis God who strews
These blessings at our feet.

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They're tokens of unfailing love,
Sweet harbingers of bliss;
They point to fairer realms above,
E'en while they brighten this.

CO. SCHOOLS

Then let us gently lift them up,
Nor bruise the fragile stem,
Nor crush the tiny pearly cup
Wherein the dew-drops blend.

But bear them to yon hill and dell,
Where sleep the honored brave,
The heroes who in battle fell
Our own dear land to save.

There gratefully and tenderly
We'll place above each head
The fairest of our floral gifts,
A tribute to our dead.

And with these simple offerings
Let humble prayers ascend,
That war no more shall blight our land,
No more shall slay a friend.

The Ballad of the Rubber-plant and the Palm.

(The quaint humor of these verses must be appreciated by the speaker to carry it successfully to the audience.)

A Rubber-plant and a small Palm stood
Upon a marble floor.
From either side the fireplace
They scanned each other o'er.

"What do you rub?" the small Palm asked
His statelier neighbor tall.
"Alas!" the Rubber-plant replied,
"I cannot rub at all.

"If I had hands like yours," he said,
As wistfully he eyed
His smaller neighbor's pretty palms
With fingers opened wide,

"Then I could rub!"—"And yet," replied
The little Palm, "you see,
Though I have hands, I cannot rub,
And that's the rub with me.

"I wonder why it's always so:
That something we have got
Seems never quite complete to be
Without what we have not.

"I've often longed to rub my hands
With glee, here in my tub;
And you, no doubt, have often wished
You had some hands to rub.

"Now, if you were I, or I were you,—
No, that's not right, I see,—
But if you *and* I were you *or* I,
What a fine plant we should be!"

Still, they did as all good plants should—
Kept green all winter long:
So no one ever knew or guessed
That anything was wrong.

—*Alice W. Rollins.*

The Boys We Need.

Here's to the boy who's not afraid
To do his share of work;
Who never is by toil dismayed,
And never tries to shirk.

The boy whose heart is brave to meet
All lions in the way;
Who's not discouraged by defeat,
But tries another day.

The boy who always means to do
The very best he can;
Who always keeps the right in view,
And aims to be a man.

Such boys as those will grow to be
The men whose hands will guide
The future of our land; and we
Shall speak their names with pride.

All honor to the boy who is
A man of heart, I say;
Whose legend on his shield is this,
"Right always wins the day."

A Kind Little Girl.

By Eva Lovett.

Last night I heard the froggies croak,
They must be dreadful hoarse,
Their throats must hurt 'em awfully,
Just like mine did, of course.

When I was hoarse they gave me lots
Of sirup in a spoon;
If those poor froggies had it, too,
I know they'd get well soon.

So—don't you tell—when nursie's gone,
I'll climb up to the shelf,
An' get the bottle an' the spoon,
An' give 'em some myself!

Would You Believe It?

(Two children may speak these lines, each in turn giving a verse.)

First Child :

A morning-glory on our wall,
With round and rosy face,
That smiled alike on one and all,
And lighted up the place,—
One rainy day that flower queer
Shut up its cheerful eye.

It looked so dull and strange, oh dear!
It really made me sigh.
Would you believe a flower so gay
Could look so sad that rainy day?

Second Child:

A little maid within our walls,
That makes our life's delight,
Her smile like sunshine on us falls,
When her sweet face is bright,—
One rainy day that child of ours
Put on a doleful pout.
She frowned all day because the shower
Kept her from playing out.
Would you believe a maid so gay
Could look so sad that rainy day?
—*Mary Chase Thurlow in "The Outlook."*

Little Bird Blue.

(A recitation for Bird Day or Arbor Day.)

Little Bird Blue, come sing us your song;
The cold winter weather has lasted so long,
We're tired of skates, and we're tired of sleds,
We're tired of snow-banks as high as our heads;
Now we're watching for you,
Little Bird Blue.

Soon as you sing, then the springtime will come,
The robins will call and the honey-bees hum,
And the dear little pussies, so cunning and gray,
Will sit in the willow-trees over the way;
So hurry, please do,
Little Bird Blue!

We're longing to hunt in the woods, for we know
Just where the spring-beauties and liverwort grow;
We're sure they will peep when they hear your
first song,
But why are you keeping us waiting so long.
All waiting for you,
Little Bird Blue ?
—*Elizabeth H. Thomas in "The Youth's Companion."*

Our Native Land.

A patriotic thought to be recited by the youngest pupil on Washington's Birthday.

By C. PHILLIPS.

Other countries, far and near,
Other people hold most dear;
Other countries ne'er can be
Half so dear to you and me
As our own, our native land.
By it firmly let us stand.

The Months.

January brings the snow,
Makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes sharp and chill,
Shakes the dancing daffodil.

April brings the primrose sweet,
Scatters daises at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs,
Sporting round their fleecy dams.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses,
Fills the children's hands with posies.

Hot July brings thunder-showers,
Apricots and gillyflowers.

August brings the sheaves of corn,
Then the harvest home is borne.

Warm September brings the fruit,
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.

Brown October brings the pheasant;
Then to gather nuts is pleasant.

Dull November brings the blast—
Hark ! the leaves are whirling fast.

Cold December brings the sleet,
Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.

—*Sara Coleridge.*

A Winter Song.

By A. L. P.

Away high up in a chestnut-tree
A tiny baby is sleeping to-night,
With not a thought of the wind's cold breath,
Or of summer days so warm and bright.

A dainty cradle the baby has,
Cozy and soft and all of brown;
And baby is wrapped in blankets warm,
Made of the finest, whitest down.

"Who is this baby sweet? You ask,
"And where can the baby's mother be?"
A little brown bud is the baby dear,
And the mother, I think, is the chestnut-tree.

The Snowflakes.

Softly down from the cold, gray sky,
On the withering air they flit and fly;
Resting anywhere; there they lie,—
The feathery flowers!
Borne on the breath of the wintry day,
Leaves and flowers and gems are they,
Fresh and fair as the gay array
Of the sunlit hours.

The Little Boy and the Sheep.

Lazy sheep, pray tell me why
In the pleasant fields you lie,
Eating grass and daises white
From the morning till the night?
Everything can something do,
But what kind of use are you?

Nay, my little master, nay,
Do not serve me so, I pray;

Don't you see the wool that grows
On my back to make your clothes ?
Cold, ah, very cold you'd be
If you had not wool from me.

True, it seems a pleasant thing
Nipping daisies in the spring,
But what chilly nights I pass
On the cold and dewy grass,
Or pick my scanty dinner where
All the ground is brown and bare !

Then the farmer comes at last,
When the merry spring is past,
Cuts my woolly fleece away
For your coat in wintry day.
Little master, this is why
In the pleasant fields I lie.

—*Ann Taylor.*

To My Dolly.

By Jennie D. Moore.

(A little girl holds a doll in her arms in such a position that the eyes will close when she puts it to sleep. When singing the lullaby she swings dolly to and fro gently.)

O dolly with the flaxen hair,
Pretty dolly, sweet and fair,
How I love you !

Dolly with the cheeks of pink,
You are beautiful, I think,
And I love you.

Shut your eyes now, dolly. Lie
In my arms. A lullaby
I will sing you.

May some fairy guard your sleep,
Slumber sweet and slumber deep
May it bring you.

(*Sings.* Air, chorus of "Rock a-bye-Baby.")

Hush-a-by dolly, hush-a-by, dear,
Close your blue eyes, you need have no fear,
Sleep on sweetly, while I am nigh,
Dolly, to guard you, hush-a-by.
Hush-a-by, hush-a-by, dolly so dear,
Hush-a-by, hush-a-by, while I am near,
Up and down, up and down, now low, now high,
Sleep on so soundly, hush-a-by-by.

Dandelions.

By E. L. Benedict.

(A recitation for May Day exercises.)

There surely is a gold mine somewhere,
Down beneath the grass;
For dandelions are popping up
In every place you pass.

But if you want to gather some,
You'd better not delay,
For the gold will turn to silver soon,
And all will blow away.

Nonsense Verses.

What would you see if I took you up
To my little nest in the air ?
You would see the sky like a clear, blue cup
Turned upside downwards there.

What would you do if I took you there
To my little nest in the tree ?
My child with cries would trouble the air,
To get what she could but see.

What would you get in the top of the tree
For all your crying and grief ?
Not a star would your clutch of all you see—
You could only gather a leaf.

But when you had lost your greedy grief,
Content to see from afar,
You would find in your heart a withering leaf,
In your heart a shining star.

—*George MacDonald.*

Character.

Daily deed and daily thought,
Slowly into habit wrought,
Raise that temple, base or fair,
Which men call our character.
Build it nobly, build it well :
In that temple God may dwell !

—*Edward W. Benson.*

Wild Carrot.

(The pupil in reciting exhibits a stalk of the wild carrot.)

Of all Queen Summer's ladies, she
Has daintiest parasol;
You could not buy in Paris
One prettier for a doll.
A dozen little silken ribs
Hold everything in place,
Covered, as for a princess,
With loveliest white lace.

—*Alice W. Rollins.*

Pussy Willow.

By Carrie T. Smith.

(An Arbor Day recitation.)

Little pussy-willow, hanging on the tree,
Knew that pleasant spring had come,
And wished the sun to see.

Little pussy-willow growing, oh ! so fast,
Found her seamless overcoat
Too small for her at last.

Faster and faster grew pussy, alack !
Till she split her winter overcoat
Right up the back.

Then she put on a dress of silver-gray fur,
And it almost seemed
As if she must purr.

A little later, and lo and behold !
She is covered with pollen
Like shining gold.

And dear little stamens, so slender and white,
Hold their pollen-tops up
To catch the sunlight.

And inside her dress, so tiny and shy,
Are dear little seeds
All ready to fly.

But pussies must go, for the leaves will be here;
Next March is the time
When they reappear.

The Apple.

By Grace O. Kyle.

(The child holds an apple as she recites.)

I am an apple red,
In the orchard I was bred.
You can eat me if you wish,
Or cook me in a dish,
Or give me to a friend
Who calls an hour to spend.

Good-bye, Little Flowers.

(For autumn exercises.)

Hark ! through the pine boughs
  Cold wails the blast.
Birds south are flying,
Summer is dying,
  Flower-time is past.

Cold are November skies,
Sunless and drear,
Goldenrod, eyelids close;
Aster, tuck in your toes;
Winter is here.

"Good-by, little flowers!"
The icy winds sing;
Snow, blanket them over;
Sleep well, little clover,
Sleep till the spring.

Two Little Girls I Know.

(This recitation must be given expressively, with significant gestures.)

I know a little girl
(You? Oh no!)
Who, when she's asked to go to bed,
Does just so:
She brings a dozen wrinkles out,
And takes the dimples in;
She puckers up her pretty lips
And then she does begin:
"Oh dear me! I don't see why
All the others sit up late,
And why can't I?"

Another little girl I know,
With curly pate,
Who says, "When I'm a great big girl,
I'll sit up late.
But mamma says 'twill make me grow
To be an early bird."

So she and dolly trot away
Without another word.
Oh, the sunny smile and the eye so blue,
And—why, yes, now I think of it,
She looks like you !
—" *The Youth's Companion.*"

Which General ?

(For Washington's Birthday or any patriotic exercises.)

Sometimes mamma calls me " general ";
I wish I knew which one;
But I always try to tell the truth,
So I *hope* it's Washington.

But when I tell my papa that,
He laughs loud as he can,
And says if she calls me " general "
She must mean Sheridan;

Because whenever she wants me,
And I am out at play,
I nearly always seem to be
'Bout " twenty miles away."
—*Kate W. Hamilton in " The Youth's Companion.*"

The Little Bird.

(A very small boy may say these words and follow the description in the first line with three jumps on one foot.)

Once I saw a little bird come hop, hop, hop.
So I cried, " Little bird, will you stop, stop, stop ?"
And was going to the window to say " How do you do ? "
But he shook his little tail and far away he flew.

The Other Tree.

By Carrie Van Gilder.

(For Washington's Birthday.)

Washington was one forefather.
Who were the other three ?
Didn't any of them have birthdays ?
I hope they had, for you see :
We never could have too many good times,
As we do on Washington day.
Don't the history tell us, mamma,
The other three birthdays ?

Butterflies.

Butterflies are pretty things,
Prettier than you or I.
See the color on his wings.
Who would hurt a butterfly ?

Not to hurt a living thing
Let all little children try.
See ! again he's on the wing.
Good-by, pretty butterfly.

If I Had a Hatchet.

By C. Phillips.

(These lines a primary girl may recite on Washington's Birthday. When she finishes the teacher presents her with a tiny hatchet tied with a ribbon.)

If only I had a nice little hatchet
Just cut from the sandal-wood,
I'd deck it with gold and a ribbon to match it
Most beautiful, bright, and good.

Then right in the corner, on my own little bracket,
Thus neatly adorned it should stand,
Reminding us all of the boy with the hatchet
Who grew up to rescue our land.

Remembrance.

(To be recited on Memorial Day.)

By Lillie V. Mickel.

A little blue violet looked up to the sky,
And nodded and smiled—I asked her why.
"O little blossom, what would you say?
Why do you nod so glad and gay?"
"I am telling of soldiers brave and true;
Come close, and I'll whisper it all to you."

A little brown wren with eyes so bright
Was warbling a song at morning light.
"O little bird, what is it you say,
What are you singing all the day?"
"Oh, the soldiers did so brave a thing,
And that is why I love to sing."

If some little child you chance to meet,
Who does not know why this day we greet,
"O little child," you all would say,
"We'll tell you why we keep this day;
We give to the soldiers love and praise
Who gave us their lives in other days."

Our Country.

(For a boy to speak at any patriotic exercises.)

Our country stands
With outstretched hands
  Appealing to her boys.
From them must flow
Her weal, her woe,
  Her anguish or her joys.

A ship she rides
O'er human tides
  Which rise and sink anon;
Each rolling wave
May prove her grave.
  O bear her nobly on.

The friends of right
With armor bright
  A valiant, truthful band,
Through God our aid
May yet be made
  A blessing to our land.

Helping Mamma.

By JENNIE D. MOORE.

(Recitation for a little girl.)

I'm only just a little girl,
  Yet I can useful be,
There's very much that can be done
  By little folks like me.

I run the errands for mamma,
She says I do *so* well,
I always pay attention to
What she may have to tell.

I play with baby; keep her still
Then take her for a ride,
That helps I'm sure, and then I do,
Oh, *lots* of things beside.

If we will try—I know we can—
Of some good use to be,
There's very much that can be done
By little folks like me.

Pollywogs.

Wiggle, waggle, how they go,
Through the sunny waters,
Swimming high and swimming low,
Froggie's sons and daughters.

What a wondrous little tail
Each black polly carries,
Helm and oar at once, and sail,
For wind it never tarries.

When the sun goes in they sink
To their muddy pillow,
There they lie, and eat and drink
Of soft mud their fill, oh !

Wiggle, waggle, how they go !
Knowing nothing better,
Yet they some time will outgrow
Each his dusky fetter.

There are *other* folk, to-day,
Who, with slight endeavor,
Give it up, and only stay
Pollywogs forever.

—*Augusta Moore.*

Daffy-down-dilly.

(A dainty costume of green and yellow may be prepared for the tiniest primary child to appear in on Arbor Day reciting these familiar lines.)

Daffy-down-dilly has come up to town,
In a yellow petticoat and a green gown.

A Zealous Patriot.

By Susie M. Best.

(A boy's recitation for Washington's Birthday.)

If there was a war I'd get my gun
And I'd be like General Washington;
I'd sling it over my shoulder—so—
And forth to the contest I would go.

I'd ride on a stately snow-white horse
In the very thick of the fight, of course;
I'd keep the hearts of my soldiers true,
For that is the way he used to do.

If there was a war I'd try to be
A brave defender of liberty,
I'd think of the way that Washington
Fought and conquered in days long done.

I'd be so full of a patriot's zeal
The hardships of war I would not feel;
If I died in battle, my wounds should show
I fell on the field fronting the foe.

But oh ! to be good from day to day
Is a harder task than to lead the fray;
Yet I'll do my examples and fetch the wood,
For heroes begin by being good !

The Corn.

By Grace O. Kyle.

I am an ear of corn.
A grain was planted one morn,
It grew up tall and green;
The handsomest ever seen.
Soon it had many an ear,
But not one made to hear.
They ripened toward the fall
And the farmer plucked them all.

Kind Hearts.

Kind hearts are the gardens,
  Kind thoughts are the roots;
Kind words are the flowers,
  Kind deeds are the fruits.

Take care of your garden
  And keep out the weeds.
Fill, fill it with sunshine,
  Kind words and kind deeds.

Milkweed.

Now is the time for yachting, and the milkweed sets afloat,
On the blue air flecked with flower-foam, its brown and tiny boat.
It sets its white and silken sails, when, presto ! on the wind
The pretty sails float off themselves and leave the boat behind.

But they take with them an anchor, a brown and tiny seed;
And when they light they find themselves anchored like the weed.
The brown seed grows and grows, and with another summer's gales
New boats float lightly on the air, laden with silken sails.

—*Alice W. Rollins.*

The Small Boy and His String.

(He holds up a string as he speaks.)

What can a small boy do with a string ?
Well, I should guess about everything:

Make a cat's cradle; tie up a knot
In every place he oughtn't and ought;

Send his kite flying up in the air;
Sail his boat on the pond over there;

Make a stone-sling, and a red top spin;
Catch a small fish with the aid of a pin—

These are a few things, not nearly all;
So, under his knife, marbles, popgun, and ball,

In a boy's pocket the bottommost thing
Is always a piece of good stout string.

Six Little Sparrows.

By Amy Kahm.

Six little sparrows were flying around,
In front of my window, right near the ground.

They were chasing a bee from its nice little hive;
The bee stung one, and so there were five.

Five little sparrows were flying near the shore;
A wave came and swallowed one, and so there were four.

Four little sparrows trying to get free;
A net caught one, and so there were three.

Three little sparrows playing peek-aboo;
One got lost, and then there were two.

Two little sparrows were playing with a gun;
One went and shot himself, and so there was one.

One little sparrow fretting all alone,
He died too, and so there were none.

Which is Your Way?

If anything unkind you hear
About some one you know, my dear,
Do not, I pray you, it repeat
When you that some one chance to meet;
For such news has a leaden way
Of clouding o'er a sunny day.
But if you something pleasant hear
About some one you know, my dear,
Make haste—to make great haste were well—
To her or him the same to tell;
For such news has a golden way
Of lighting up a cloudy day.

When I Am Big.

(A little boy's speech to be given with a pompous manner.)

When I am big I mean to buy
A dozen platters of pumkin pie,
A barrel of nuts, to have 'em handy,
And fifty pounds of sugar-candy.

When I am big, I mean to wear
A long-tailed coat, and crop my hair;
I'll buy a paper, and read the news,
And sit up late whenever I choose.

Summer Time.

By Susie M. Best.

Oh, summer, summer, summer's here,
With suns and showers,
With birds and bees and full-leaved trees,
And gayly colored flowers.

Oh, summer, summer, summer's here,
Sweet breezes blowing;
In pastures green (their own demesne),
We hear the cattle lowing.

Oh, summer, summer, summer's here,
And earth rejoices;
She sings the praise of lovely days
With all her myriad voices.

A Candy-Pull.

Two little maids had a candy-pull,
Once, on a winter's day;
"The very best time that ever was,
And the sweetest, too!" laughed May.

But mamma frowned, with her comb in hand:
"There is candy everywhere;
And as if 'tweren't scattered quite enough,
Here is some in Gracie's hair!"

And Gracie's eyes with tears were blind,
As she clung to mamma's knee;
"I fink that this is the very worst kind
Of a candy-pull!" sobbed she.

Being A Man.

(The words in italics should be given with emphasis, and each line spoken with deliberation.)

I can tell you how to be a man—
This is the way to begin:
Stop saying, "*I can't*," and say "*I can*,"—
March up to your work with a good stiff chin—
That is the way to begin.

If you mean to be a man, you know
You must do the best you can.
When the tempter comes, you must speak up,
"*No !*"
He'll take to his heels if you talk to him so;
I've tried it myself, and that's how I know,
For *I'm* going to be a man !

Yes, no more whining nor tears for me:
I've left them out of my plan:
No falsehood, no words profane or low;
I turn my back on all *that*, you know,
When I start to be a *man*.

March.

By E. L. Benedict.

Here he comes a-roaring—old mad March !
Stirring up a panic in the branches of the larch.
All the little floury flakes he shakes about and sifts,
Until they fall affrighted into curved and scalloped drifts.

Shining hills and valleys out of frozen mist he makes,
And snowy mounds that make you think of jolly frosted cakes.

Working for Our Flag.

By F. Ursula Payne.

(A recitation for Flag Day.)

We're working for our flag each day,
Though we are very small,
And you will hear some big folks say
We cannot work at all.

We're working for our flag each day,
And each good deed we do
Is like a little budding flower
Around our flag so true.

We're working for our flag each day,
Our bright and starry flag;
We'll spend our lives without a fear,
In working for our flag.

Golden Keys.

A bunch of golden keys is mine,
To make each day with gladness shine.
"Good-morning," that's the golden key
That unlocks every day for me.
When evening comes, "Good-night," I say,
And close the door of each glad day.
When at the table, "If you please"
I take from off my bunch of keys.

When friends do anything to me,
I use the little " Thank you " key.
" Excuse me," " Beg your pardon," too,
When by mistake some harm I do;
Or, if unkindly harm I've given,
With " Forgive me " I shall be forgiven.
On a golden ring these keys I'll bind;
This is its motto, " Be ye kind."
I'll often use each golden key,
And then a child polite I'll be.

My Little Neighbor.

By Agnes M. Manning.

(A recitation for Bird Day.)

A bird sits singing in our tree;
This is the song she sings to me:
" Oh, don't you touch my little nest !
But leave my birdies there at rest."

Every morn when I awake,
Some crumbs of bread to her I take;
Every night she waits to see
That I'm in bed and sings to me.

The National Colors.

(To be spoken on Flag Day or any patriotic occasion.)

The red has been dyed with the blood of the brave,
Who perished while fighting a nation to save;
The white is the snow, as new-fallen it lies;
The union, a square of the star-lighted skies.

—*W. I. Davis.*

An April Day.

By Anna M. Pratt.

On an April day,
When things fell out in an April way,
The heavens were suddenly overcast,
The sky grew black and the rain fell fast;
Swiftly the tears began to rise
In Marjorie's eyes.

On an April day,
When her sport was lost by an hour's delay,
I watched a dear child struggle the while;
She conquered her tears with a pleasant smile,
Till I saw the sunshine I missed from the skies
In Marjorie's eyes.

On an April day,
When it suddenly cleared in an April way,
The sun shone out and the rainbow grew;
We gazed with delight, but for me there were two,
For her smile through her tears were the rainbow's guise
In Marjorie's eyes.

The Way.

Good morrow, fair maid, with lashes brown.
Can you tell me the way to Womanhood town?
Oh! this way and that way—never stop,
'Tis picking up articles Grandma will drop;
'Tis kissing the baby's troubles away;
'Tis learning that cross words never will pay;
'Tis helping mother, 'tis sewing up rents;
'Tis reading and playing, 'tis saving cents;

'Tis loving and smiling, forgetting to frown:
Oh, that is the way to Womanhood town!

The Stars.

By Laura F. Armitage.

Our merry little Grace
Had pressed her chubby face
Close to the window at the close of day;
As fast as the stars came out,
She gave a merry shout,
"Oh, see!" she said, "they're coming out to play."

"They are the fireflies,
Far up there in the skies,
Who in the fields, last summer, used to play;
But now cold weather's come,
They all have gone back home.
I'm very glad I've found out where they stay."

The Robin.

(A recitation for Bird Day.)

Once there was a robin
Lived outside the door,
Who wanted to go inside
And hop upon the floor.
"Oh, no!" said the mother;
"You must stay with me;
Little birds are safest
Sitting in a tree."
"I don't care," said robin,

And gave his tail a fling;
"I don't think the old folks
Know quite everything."
Down he flew, and kittie seized him
Before he'd time to blink.
"Oh," he cried, "I'm sorry!
But I didn't think."

A Queer Little Girl.

As queer a girl as ever was seen
Was little May Evelyn Caroline Green.
She sat a-wishing from morning till night
For everything in or out of her sight.

Her small brother Ned, who thought sister May
Was silly to spend her time wishing all day,
Told nurse in confidence, once after dinner,
That he was afraid she'd a wish-bone in her.

Thanksgiving.

(A recitation for a boy for Thanksgiving exercises.)

By Jennie D. Moore.

Pies of pumpkin, apple, mince,
Jams and jellies, peaches, quince,
Purple grapes and apples red,
Cakes and nuts and gingerbread—
That's Thanksgiving.

Turkey! Oh, a great big fellow!
Fruits, all ripe and rich and mellow;

Everything that's nice to eat,
More than I can now repeat—
That's Thanksgiving.

Lots and lots of jolly fun,
Games to play and races run;
All as happy as can be
For 'tis happiness, you see,
Makes Thanksgiving.

We must thank the One who gave
All the good things that we have.
That is *why* we keep the day
Set aside, our mammas say,
For Thanksgiving.

Little Star.

Good-night, little star!
I will go to my bed,
And leave you to burn
While I lay down my head.

On my pillow I'll sleep
Till the morning light;
Then you will be fading
And I shall be bright.

The Flag of Freedom.

(A recitation for Flag Day.)

The flag of freedom here unfurled
Is hailed by millions from afar—
The conquering standard of the world,
Sublime alike in peace and war.

It proudly floats on every sea,
Is honored now on every shore;
It whispers to the oppressed: "Be free,"
And kindles hopes unknown before.

A Little Girl's Song of Autumn.

The autumn has filled me with wonder to-day,
The wind seems so sad, while the trees look so gay;
The sky is so blue, while the fields are so brown,
While bright leaves and brown leaves drift all through the town.
I wish I could tell why the world changes so;
But I am a little girl—I cannot know!

The sun rises late, and then goes down so soon,
I think it is evening before it is noon!
Of the birds and the flowers hardly one can be found,
Though the little brown sparrows stay all the year round.
I wish I could tell you where all the birds go;
But I am a little girl—I cannot know!

O Autumn! why banish such bright things as they?
Pray turn the world gently! don't scare them away!
And now they are gone, will you bring them again?
If they come in the spring I may n't be here then.
Why go they so swiftly, then come back so slow?
Oh, I'm but a little girl—I cannot know.

A Lazy Boy's Idea.

By Rufus C. Langdon.

"Just drop a nickle in the slot!"
Well, now, that's very handy—
"Just drop a nickle in the slot!"
And, lo, you have your candy!

I know a boy who wishes that
A slot, or perforation,
Were in his head through which he might
Just drop an education.

There he could draw, from time to time,
All kinds of information,
And never have to study more
Against his inclination.

A foolish youth he is indeed,
For not without a tussle
With schoolbooks can he hope to gain
A wealth of mental muscle.

A shiftless boy is he as well—
How wretched his condition!
Content to be a mere machine
Without a grand ambition!

Harvest.

"You will reap what you sow," said the wise papa;
And the wise little boy who heard
Said at once, "Then I'll plant some canary-seed,
And perhaps I shall raise a bird."

—*Alice W. Rollins.*

My Bed Is A Boat.

(Recitation for a boy.)

My bed is like a little boat;
Nurse helps me in when I embark;
She girds me in my sailor's coat
And starts me in the dark.

At night I go on board, and say
Good-night to all my friends on shore;
I shut my eyes and sail away,
And see and hear no more.

And sometimes things to bed I take,
As prudent sailors have to do:
Perhaps a slice of wedding-cake,
Perhaps a toy or two.

All night across the dark we steer;
But when the day returns at last,
Safe in my room, beside the pier,
I find my vessel fast.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

The Old Apple-Tree.

(A recitation for Arbor Day.)

I'm fond of the good apple-tree;
A very good-natured friend is he,
For, knock at his door whene'er you may,
He's always something to give away.

Shake him in winter : on all below
He'll send down a shower of feathery snow;
And when the spring sun is shining bright,
He'll fling down blossoms pink and white.

And when the summer comes so warm,
He shelters the little birds safe from harm;
And shake him in autumn, he will not fail
To send you down apples thick as hail.

Therefore it cannot a wonder be
That we sing Hurrah for the apple-tree !

The Bashful Marguerite.

Sweet Marguerite looked shyly from the grass
Of country field, and softly whispered, " Here
I make my home, content; for I,—alas !—
Am not the rose the city holds so dear ! "

Just then the Queen, driving by chance that way,
Called to a page : " Bring me that Marguerite;
I am so tired of roses ! "—From that day
The daisy had the whole world at her feet.

—*Alice W. Rollins.*

Every Little Helps.

What if a drop of rain should plead,
" So small a drop as I
Can ne'er refresh the thirsty mead,
I'll tarry in the sky."

What if the shining beam of noon,
Should in its fountain stay,
Because its feeble light alone
Cannot create a day ?

Does not each rain-drop help to form,
And every ray of light to warm
And beautify, the flower ?

My Shadow.

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller, like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.

He stays so close beside me, he's a coward, you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup.
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

How the Week Goes.

By Kate West.

Monday rub, and Tuesday iron,
Wednesday lay the things away;
Thursday creep, and Friday sweep,
And Saturday bake for the Sabbath day.

Monday rub from tub to tub,
Monday rinse and twist and dry;
Tuesday shake and starch and smooth,
And hang the snow-white frills on high;

Wednesday pack them in the drawer;
Thursday scrub and shine the floor;
Friday with the pan and broom
Sweep the stairway, hall, and room;

Saturday we roast and bake
Cookies, pies, and golden cake,
Something, Sabbath day, to eat:
Thus the week is all complete.

He Didn't Think.

Once a trap was baited
With a piece of cheese;
It tickled so a little mouse
It almost made him sneeze.

An old rat said, "There's danger—
Be careful where you go!"
"Nonsense!" said the other,
"I don't think you know!"

So he walked in boldly;
Nobody in sight;
First he took a nibble,
Then he took a bite.

Close the trap together
Snapped as quick as wink,
Catching mousey fast there,
'Cause he didn't think.

—*Phœbe Cary.*

What To Look For.

Do not look for wrong or evil,—
You will find them if you do;
As you measure for your neighbor
He will measure back to you.

Look for goodness, look for gladness,
You will meet them all the while;
If you bring a smiling visage
To the glass you meet a smile.

—*Alice Cary.*

Violet.

I love all things the seasons bring,
All buds that start, all birds that sing,
All leaves from white to jet,
All the sweet words that summer sends,
When she recalls her flowery friends,
But chief—the violet.

—BARRY CORNWALL.

The Field Lilies.

To the golden brimmed buttercups morning dews cling,
From their pink clover cradles the restless bees swing,
And on wings iridescent in sunshine float by,
And to breezes low murmuring murmur reply;
And aflame with their glory, the field lilies know
Why the world is so fair, as in triumph they blow,
Ringing jubilant chimes as they swing and they sway,
While the meadow larks echo, "It's summer to-day,
Summer, summer to-day!"

O'er the far hills is hanging a delicate veil,
Through exquisite ether the butterflies sail
And an ocean of blue seems becalmed on the sky,
Where the cloudships unmoored at their cloud moorings lie,
And, aflame with their glory, the field lilies know
Why the world is so fair, as in triumph they blow,
Ringing jubilant chimes as they swing and they sway,
While the meadow larks echo, "It's summer to-day,
Summer, summer to-day!"

—L. C. WHITON STONE.

Cowslip.

Welcome, thrice welcome, all our friends,
I have not much to bring;
I'm but the yellow cowslip,
The humblest flower of spring.

Buttercup.

They say I'm but an idle weed,
  As useless as I'm gay;
But there was never yet a flower
  More loyal to the May.

Columbine.

The Columbine hung down her beautiful head:
"You see I can't blow my own trumpet," she said.
"Why, I'll blow it for you," a bee passing by
Said kindly, and entered her parlor to try.
Then he buzzed, blew, and hummed, such a beautiful air!
And honey for money she gave to him there.
To get what you want, and be generous, too:—
That's a message the bee has, for me and for you.

—Alice W. Rollins.

The Daffodils.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
  That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
  A host, of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
  And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
  Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
  Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:

A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

—William Wordsworth.

Hepatica.

So cold it is, the violet ne'er ventures out or stirs;
But hepaticas come fearlessly, wrapped in their dainty furs.

—Alice W. Rollins.

Lilies.

Every flower is sweet to me;
The rose and violet,
The pink, the daisy, and sweet pea,
Heart's ease and mignonette,
And hyacinth and daffodillies;
But sweetest are the spotless lilies.

—Caroline May.

Dandelion—First Up.

A brave little dandelion woke up from his nap,
And hunted around in the dark for his cap.
"I'm certain," he muttered, "it ought to be here,
In the very same corner I left it last year."

He poked all about in the dirt and the dark,
For the same little hat that he wore in the ark,
For fashions may vary with people and clime,
But dandelions wear the same hat all the time.

"What's o'clock?" and he paused while he counted the fuz
That had crept through his locks, as old age always does;
Then he settled himself to pluck out the old feathers,
That had done so much service in all kinds of weathers.

Rather frowsy he looked, getting into his hat,
But he knew that the rain would take care of all that,
If he only were up; so he pulled on his boots
And began to push up from his tough little roots.

Kept pushing, still cheerful, still hopeful, till push!
He rose to the surface, close by the old bush.
With the frost scarcely out, and the ground hardly mellow,
Here he is on the top now, the brave little fellow.

The first dandelion! Well may we delight
And call all the children to see the glad sight.
For of all the brave prospects of hope and of spring
The golden-crowned dandelion surely is king.

Violets in Spring.

O, wind, where have you been,
That you blow so sweet?
Among the violets
Which blossom at your feet.

The honeysuckle waits
For summer and for heat;
But violets in the chilly spring
Make the turf so sweet.

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

The Violet.

Dear little violet,
Don't be afraid,
Lift your blue eyes
From the rock's mossy shade,

All the birds call for you,
Out of the sky;
May is here waiting,
And here, too, am I.

Why do you shiver so,
Violet sweet?
Soft is the meadow grass
Under my feet.
Wrapped in your hood of green,
Violet, why
Peep from your earth door
So silent and shy?

—Lucy Larcom.

Wild Carrot.

Of all Queen Summer's ladies, she
Has daintiest parasol,
You could not buy in Paris
One prettier for a doll.
A dozen little silken ribs
Hold everything in place;
Covered, as for a princess
With loveliest white lace.

—Alice W. Rollins.

The Lilac.

The sun shone warm, and the lilac said,
"I must hurry and get my table spread,
For if I am slow, and dinner late,
My friends, the bees, will have to wait."

So delicate lavender glass she brought
And the daintiest china ever bought,
Purple tinted, and all complete,
And she filled each cup with honey sweet.

"Dinner is ready!" the spring wind cried;
And from hive and hiding, far and wide,
While the lilac laughed to see them come,
The little gray-jacketed bees came hum-m!

They sipped the syrup from every cell,
They nibbled at taffy and caramel;
Then, without being asked, they all buzzed: "We
Will be very happy to stay to tea."

—CLARA DOTY BATES.

The Little Plant.

In the heart of a seed,
Buried deep, so deep,
A dear little plant
Lay fast asleep.

"Wake!" said the sunshine,
"And creep to the light."
"Wake!" said the voice
Of the raindrops bright.

The little plant heard,
And it rose to see
What the wonderful
Outside world might be.

—KATE L. BROWN.

Little Dandelion.

Dainty little Dandelion
In your bed of green,
With your pretty golden crown,
You look like a queen.

In the springtime early,
You peep from the grass,
And you nod a welcome
To me as I pass.

Oh, you look so happy
As you smile on me,
All the children love you,
When your face they see.

I would be just like you,
Smiling all the day,
Always bright and cheerful.
As I go my way.

—M. Belle Austin.

Dandelions.

There surely is a gold mine somewhere,
Down beneath the grass;
For dandelions are popping up,
In every place you pass.

But if you want to gather some,
You'd better not delay,
For the gold will turn to silver soon,
And all will blow away.

—E. L. Benedict.

Golden Rod.

An idle breeze strayed up and down,
The rusty fields and meadows brown,
Sighing a grievous sigh, "Ah, me!
Where can the summer blossoms be?"
When suddenly a glorious face
Shone on him from a weedy space,
And with an airy, plumy nod,
"Good afternoon!" said the Golden Rod.

The breeze received her courtesy
And then came hurrying home to me,
And eagerly this story told:
"I've seen a lady dressed in gold,

So shining that the very light
That touches her is doubly bright—
She nodded, too, a royal nod."
"Why, that," I said, "is Golden-Rod."

"Come out and see her where she stands,
Gold on her head and in her hands,"
He cried; and I without delay
Went after where he led the way;
And there she stood, all light, all grace,
Illumining that weedy place,
And to us both, with airy nod,
"Good afternoon!" said Golden-Rod.

—CLARA DOTY BATES.

Partridge Vine.

The partridge vine offers its berries of red,
With round green leaves for dishes, most temptingly spread,
For birds hungry in winter to come there and feed.
A bird bit a berry, and out flew a seed,
That hid itself shyly in earth; but in turn
(For true modesty always is willing to learn)
Came up a new vine with new berries of red,
While new birds of next winter came now to be fed.
A bird brings a berry,—a berry a bird:
It's the nicest arrangement I ever have heard.

—ALICE W. ROLLINS.

Strawberry Blossom.

When the fields are sweet with clover,
And the woods are glad with song,
When the brooks are running over,
And the days are bright and long,
Then from every nook and bower,
Peeps the dainty strawberry flower.

—DORA READ GOODALE.

The Flowers' Lesson.

Pretty flowers in woodland living,
Sweetest perfume now are giving
To the summer air.
Oh, the meadows green are glowing
With a beauty overflowing,
For the flowers are there.

Pretty flowers in garlands weaving,
Nature's gifts with joy receiving
On this summer day.
In our hands the garlands bearing,
In our hair the blossoms wearing,
While we sing and play.

Pretty flowers, your praise we're singing,
For the beauty you are bringing
In these sunny hours.
Day by day must we be ever
Pure and sweet, forgetting never
What we learn from flowers.

The Purple Pansy.

Of all the bonny buds that blow
In bright or cloudy weather.
Of all the flowers that come and go,
The whole twelve moons together,
The little purple pansy brings
Thoughts of the sweetest, saddest things.

Spring Flowers.

First comes Crocus, brave little fellow,
Dressed in purple, white and yellow;
Then tall Tulip, bright and gay,
Shakes out his dress and nods "Good Day."

Who do you think is the next to unfold?
Stately Daffodil, yellow as gold!
Then, sweet and fair, with a timid grace,
Little white Snowdrop lifts up her face;
Now waking up when the sunbeams call,
See purple violet, sweet and small.

Forget-me-not.

When to flowers so beautiful
The Father gave a name,
Back came a little blue-eyed one—
All timidly it came—
And standing at the Father's feet,
And gazing on His face,
It said with meek and timid voice,
Yet with a gentle grace,
"Dear Lord, the name Thou gavest me
Alas! I have forgot."
The Father gently smiled on it
And said, "Forget-me-not."

The Message of the Rose.

Only a rose in a glass,
Set by a sick man's bed;
The day was weary, the day was long,
But the rose it spoke with a voice-like song,
And this is what it said:—

"I know that the wind is keen,
And the drifted snow lies deep;
I know that the cruel ice lies spread
O'er the laughing brook and the lake's blue bed,
And the fountains rush and leap.

"I know, I know all this;
Yet here I sit—a rose!

Smiling I sit and I feel no fear,
For God is good and spring is near,
Couched in the shrouding snows.

"Canst thou not smile with me?
Art thou less strong than I?
Less strong at heart than a feeble flower
Which lives and blossoms but one brief hour,
And then must droop and die?

"Surely thou canst endure
The little pains and fears,
Before whose eyes, all fair and bright,
In endless vistas of delight,
Stretch the eternal years!"

Then o'er the sick man's heart
Fell a deep and hushed repose;
He turned on his pillow and whispered low,
That only the listening flower might know:
"I thank thee, Rose, dear Rose."

Daisies.

We bring daisies, little starry daisies,
The angels have planted to remind us of the sky;
When the stars have vanished they twinkle their mute praises,
Telling in the dewy grass, of brighter fields on high.

—READ.

The Wild Poppy.

A poppy was lost in a corn-field,
Too young at the time to know how,
She was afterward told by a blue-bird
Who sang stories to her from a bough;
And learned that her folks lived in gardens,
And not in broad fields where men plough.

She grew up in her vivid young beauty,
Along with the stalks tall and green.
She blossomed out into scarlet,
She was graceful and blithe in her mien;
In all the great gardens, no poppy
More bright or more lovely was seen.

Sometimes, maybe, she thought of her cousins,
And wished she could see where they grew,
Among roses, carnations, and lilies,
Pansies, dahlias, and larkspurs of blue,
But the corn-silk was graceful and pretty,
And she best loved the spot she best knew.

She dwelt there unplucked by the farmer,
Unharmed by the children at play,
Her friends, the good blue-birds, built near her,
And the brown bees flew humming her way,
And over the field with his canvas
An artist came strolling one day.

He had left the prim gardens and borders,
The well-kept beds tempted in vain.
He was tired of the world and its fashion,
But the wide fields brought rapture again;
And he painted the wild, scarlet poppy
That grew with the ripening grain.

—Mary L. B. Branch.

Four-leaf Clover.

I know a place where the sun is like gold
And the cherry blooms burst with snow,
And down underneath is the loveliest nook
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

One leaf is for hope, and one is for faith,
And one is for love, you know,
And God put another one in for luck,
If you search you will find where they grow.

But you must have hope, and you must have faith,
You must love and be strong, and so
If you work, if you wait, you will find the place
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

—Ella Higginson.

Milkweed.

Now is the time for yachting, and the milkweed sets afloat,
On the blue air flecked with flower foam, its brown and tiny boat.
It sets its white and silken tails, when presto! on the wind
The pretty sails float off themselves and leave the boat behind.

But they take with them an anchor, a brown and tiny seed,
And when they light, they find themselves anchored like any weed.
The brown seed grows and grows, and with another summer's gales
New boats float lightly on the air, laden with silken sails.

—Alice W. Rollins.

The Little Flower.

A little flower so lowly grew,
So lonely was it left,
That heaven looked like an eye of blue,
Down in its rocky cleft.

What could the little flower do,
In such a darksome place.
But try to reach that eye of blue,
And climb to kiss heaven's face?

And there's no life so lone and low
But strength may still be given,
From narrowest lot on earth to grow
The straighter up to heaven.

—Gerald Massey.

Buttercups and Daisies.

Buttercups and daisies,
O, the pretty flowers—
Coming, ere the springtime,
To tell of sunny hours.
While the trees are leafless,
While the fields are bare
Buttercups and daisies
Spring up everywhere.

Welcome, yellow buttercups!
Welcome, daisies white!
Ye are, in my spirit,
Visioned a delight;
Coming, ere the springtime,
Of sunny hours to tell,
Speaking to our hearts of Him
Who doeth all things well.

—Mary Howitt.

Tulip Tree.

The Tulip Tree is cup-bearer, and holds most proudly up
To summer skies and wandering bee its beautiful gold cup;
And when the leaves have fallen, upon the bough you'll see
The small brown hands that held them up still reaching from the tree.

—Alice W. Rollins.

The Old Apple-tree.

I'm fond of the good apple-tree;
A very good-natured friend is he,
For, knock at his door whene'er you may,
He's always something to give away.

Shake him in winter: on all below
He'll send down a shower of feathery snow;
And when the spring sun is shining bright,
He'll fling down blossoms pink and white.

And when the summer comes so warm,
He shelters the little birds safe from harm;
And shake him in autumn, he will not fail
To send you down apples thick as hail.

Therefore it cannot a wonder be
That we sing Hurrah for the apple-tree!

Waiting to Grow.

Little white snowdrop, just waking up,
Violet, daisy, and sweet buttercup!
Think of the flowers that are under the snow,
Waiting to grow!

And think what hosts of queer little seeds—
Of flowers, and mosses, of ferns, and weeds—
Are under the leaves and under the snow,
Waiting to grow!

The Oak Tree.

Oh, grand old oak! Oh, kingly tree!
How high you lift your sturdy head;
How far your mighty branches spread;
How many birds their lays have sung,
And squirrels played your leaves among.

The Christmas Tree.

Of all the trees in the woods and fields,
There's none like the Christmas tree;
Tho' rich and rare is the fruit he yields,
The strangest of trees is he.
Some drink their fill from the shower or rill;
No cooling draught needs he;
Some bend and break when the storms awake,
But they reach not the Christmas tree.

When wintry winds thro' the forests sweep,
And snow robes the leafless limb,
When cold and still is the ice-bound deep,
O, this is the time for him!
Beneath the dome of the sunny home
He stands, with all his charms;
'Mid laugh and song from the youthful throng,
As they gaze on his fruitful arms.

There's golden fruit on the Christmas tree,
And gems for the fair and gay;
The lettered page for the mind bears he,
And robes for the wintry day.
And there are toys for the girls and boys;
And eyes that years bedim
Grow strangely bright, with a youthful light,
As they pluck from the pendant limb.

Pussy Willows.

O Mabel! O Fannie! Come out for a run!
Old winter is going! Now, now there'll be fun!
The boys, with their marbles, are down on their knees,
And wee willow pussies are climbing the trees.

The dand'lion blossom will show us their gold,
The pansies their droll little faces unfold.
The blue-birds will come and the robins and bees—
For wee willow pussies are climbing the trees.

The ants will creep up from their holes in the ground,
The blundering beetles will come bumping 'round,
The frogs will be singing in all sorts of keys—
For wee willow pussies are climbing the trees.

I love them! I love them—those sweet little cats!
They're not much for frolic nor catching of rats—
But don't the spring goodies come back by degrees
When they are seen climbing the old willow tree.

Oh, ar'n't they just lovely—all clinging so tight—
Their whiskers and scratchers tucked clear out of sight?
A-swinging and swaying in every light breeze.
They turn to pure silver the ugly old trees!

—*Boston Transcript.*

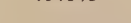
The Family Cat.

I can fold up my claws
In my soft velvet paws,
And purr in the sun
Till the short day is done—
For I am the family cat.
I can doze by the hour
In the vine-covered bower,
Winking and blinking,
Through sunshine and shower—
For I am the family cat.

From gooseberry bush
Or where bright currants blush,
I may suddenly spring
For a bird on the wing;
Or dart up a tree,
If a brown nest I see,
And select a choice morsel
For dinner or tea;
And no one to blame me,
Berate me, or shame me—
For I am the family cat.

In the cold winter night,
When the ground is all white,
And the icicles shine
In a long silver line,
I stay not to shiver
In the moonbeam's pale quiver,
But curl up in the house
As snug as a mouse,

And play Jacky Horner
In the cosiest corner;
Breaking nobody's laws,
With my chin on my paws,
Asleep with one eye, and
  Awake with the other
For pats from the children,
  Kind words from the mother—
  For I am the family cat.



Two Little Squirrels.

Two little squirrels, out in the sun;
One gathered nuts, the other had none:
"Time enough yet," was his constant refrain,
"Summer is still only just on the wane."
Listen, my child, while I tell you his fate,
He roused him at last but he did so too late;
Down fell the snow in a pitiless cloud,
And the starved little squirrel was wrapped in his shroud.

Tell me, my child, if the squirrels have taught
The lesson I wish to remain in your thought;
Answer me this, and my story is done.—
Which of the two would you be, little one?

The Squirrel.

"The squirrel is happy, the squirrel is gay,"
  Little Harry exclaimed to his brother;
He has nothing to do, or to think of but play
  And to jump from one bough to another.

But William was older and wiser, and knew
  That all play and no work wouldn't answer;
So he asked what the squirrel in winter must do,
  If he spent all the summer a dancer.

Squirrel, dear Harry, is merry and wise,
For true wisdom and mirth go together;
He lays up in summer his winter supplies,
And then doesn't mind the cold weather.

—BERNARD BARTON.

The Chickens.

Said the first little chicken
With a queer little squirm:
"I wish I could find
A fat little worm!"

Said the next little chicken,
With an odd little shrug:
"I wish I could find
A fat little bug!"

Said the third little chicken,
With a small sigh of grief:
"I wish I could find
A green little leaf!"

Said the fourth little chicken
With a faint little moan:
"I wish I could find
A wee gravel stone!"

"Now see here!" said the mother,
From the green garden patch,
"If you want any breakfast,
Just come here and scratch!"

The Monkey.

Monkey, little merry fellow,
Thou art Nature's Punchinello!
Full of fun as Puck could be,
Harlequin might learn of thee!

Look now at his odd grimaces!
Saw you ever such queer faces?
Now like learned judge sedate,
Now with nonsense in his pate.

Look now at him! gently peep!
He pretends to be asleep,—
Fast asleep upon his bed,
With his arm beneath his head.

Now that posture is not right,
And he is not settled quite;
There! that's better than before,
And the knave pretends to snore.

Ha! he is not half asleep;
See, he slyly takes a peep!
Monkey, though your eyes are shut,
You could see this little nut.

You shall have it, pigmy brother!
What! another? and another?
Nay, your cheeks are like a sack,
Sit down, and begin to crack.

There! the little ancient man
Cracks as fast as crack he can;
Now good-by, you merry fellow,
Nature's primest Punchinello.

—MARY HOWITT.

The Raccoon.

Come, child, and see our pet raccoon,—
The raccoons live in the woods, you know,
But ours was caught,
And caged, and brought
From old Virginia long ago.

Oh, no, you need not be afraid;
See, he is fastened with a chain;
For ropes enough
He has gnawed off,
And he is hard to catch again.

So now he's chained; yet up he'll climb
The stake to which he's fastened tight,
And mutter low,
So pleading, Oh!
'Twould make you sorry for him, quite.

Just see his nose, so pointed, sharp—
His ears as keen as keen can be.—
His eyes so bright,
So full of light,
And see him leap right merrily!

His fur, you see is yellowish gray,—
And he is nearly two feet long;
He lives on roots
And nuts and fruits,
When he's his native woods among.

But here we give him bread and milk;
He never eats like dogs or lambs,
But takes it up
From out the cup
With his fore feet as we use hands.

—*Mother Truth's Melodies.*

Wild Rabbits.

Among the sand-hills,
Near by the sea,
Wild young rabbits
Were seen by me.

They live in burrows
With winding ways,
And there they shelter
On rainy days.

The mother rabbits
Make cosy nests,
With hairy linings
From their breasts.

The tender young ones
Are nursed and fed,
And safely hidden
In this warm bed.

And when they are older
They all come out
Upon the sand-hills,
And frisk about.

They play, and nibble
The long, dry grass,
But scamper away
Whenever you pass.

The Frugal Snail.

The frugal snail, with forecast of repose,
Carries his house with him where'er he goes;
Peeps out,—and if there comes a shower of rain,
Retreats to his small domicile again.
Touch but a tip of him, a horn,—'tis well,—
He curls up in his sanctuary shell.
He's his own landlord, his own tenant: stay
Long as he will, he dreads no Quarter Day.
Himself he boards and lodges; both invites
And feasts himself; sleeps with himself o' nights.
He spares the upholsterer trouble to procure
Chattels; himself is his own furniture,

And his sole riches. Wheresoe'er he roam,—
Knock when you will,—he's sure to be at home.
—CHARLES LAMB, 1775–1834.

The Frog's Good-bye.

Good-bye, little children, I'm going away,
In my snug little home all winter to stay;
I seldom get up, once I'm tucked in my bed,
And as it grows colder I cover my head.

I sleep very quietly all winter through,
And really enjoy it, there's nothing to do;
The flies are all gone, so there's nothing to eat,
And I take this time to enjoy a good sleep.

My bed is a nice little hole in the ground,
Where snug as a bug in the winter I'm found.
You might think long fasting would make me grow thin,
But no! I stay plump as when I go in.

And now, little children, good-bye, one and all,
Some warm day next spring I shall give you a call;
I'm quite sure to know when to get out of bed,—
When I feel the warm sun shining down on my head.

Bird Trades.

The swallow is a mason,
And underneath the eaves
He builds a nest, and plasters it
With mud and hay and leaves.

Of all the weavers that I know,
The oriole is the best;
High on the branches of the tree
She hangs her cosy nest.

The woodpecker is hard at work—
A carpenter is he—
And you may hear him hammering
His nest high up a tree.

Some little birds are miners,
Some build upon the ground;
And busy little tailors, too,
Among the birds are found.

The Woodpecker.

Robin in the tree-top high
Sang his sweetest songs as I passed by;
Then the woodpecker said, "No song have I,
So a drummer bird I'll be!
Rub-a-dub-dub-dub-dub-dub-dub,—
I'm drumming here for thee."

Blue-bird sings me a song of cheer—
"Be glad, be glad, though days are drear!"
Then the woodpecker's note sounds loud and clear
As he drums upon the tree,—
"Rub-a-dub-dub-dub-dub-dub-dub,"
How loud he drums for me.

The oriole sings—oh, he's gaily dressed
In orange and black—but I love the best
The pied woodpecker with crimson crest.
O woodpecker, drum for me!
"Rub-a-dub-dub-dub-dub-dub-dub,"
How gaily answers he!

Of sweetest songs could I drink my fill,
Still I'd list to the sound of the woodpecker's bill.
He's my cheery friend who drums on the hill,
Oh, a gay drummer is he!
"Rub-a-dub-dub-dub-dub-dub-dub,"
Oh, hear him drum for me!

The Skylark.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flows not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

—SHELLEY.

❦❦❦

"Bob White."

When peas are ripe you hear the call, "Bob White!"
In music sweet the clear notes fall, "Bob White!"
He wants to let his sweetheart know,
That's why he keeps a-calling so.

Across the medder and the swamp, "Bob White!"
From woodlands where the rabbits romp, "Bob White!"
Still, still he calls that name o' his,—
I wonder where his sweetheart is?

From dewy morning up to night, "Bob White!"
And ringing down the sweet twilight, "Bob White!"
From break of day to evening dim,
He calls his sweetheart home to him.

❦❦❦

The Return of the Birds.

I hear from many a little throat,
A warble interrupted long;
I hear the robin's flute-like note,
The blue-bird's slenderer song.

Brown meadows and the russet hill,
Not yet the haunt of grazing herds,
And thickets by the glimmering rill,
Are all alive with birds.

—BRYANT.

The Blue-bird.

I know the song that the blue-bird is singing—
Out in the apple-tree where he is swinging.
Brave little fellow! the skies may be dreary;
Nothing cares he while his heart is so cheery.

Hark! how the music leaps out from his throat.
Hark! was there ever so merry a note?
Listen awhile and you'll hear what he's saying
Up in the apple-tree swinging and swaying:

"Dear little blossoms down under the snow,
You must be weary of winter, I know;
Hark! while I sing you a message of cheer:
Summer is coming, and springtime is here.

"Little white snowdrops! I pray you arise;
Bright yellow crocus! come, open your eyes;
Daffodils! Daffodils! say, do you hear?
Summer is coming, and springtime is here!"

—Emily Huntington Miller.

Robin Redbreast.

Good-bye, good-bye to Summer!
For Summer's nearly done;
The garden smiling faintly,
Cool breezes in the sun;
Our thrushes now are silent,
Our swallows flown away,—
But Robin's here in coat of brown,
And scarlet breast-knot gay.
Robin, robin redbreast,
Oh, Robin dear!
Robin sings so sweetly
In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red and orange,
The leaves came down in hosts;
The trees are Indian princes,
But soon they'll turn to ghosts;
The leathery pears and apples
Hang russet on the bough;
It's autumn, autumn, autumn late,
'Twill soon be winter now.
Robin, robin redbreast,
Oh, Robin dear!
And what will this poor robin do?
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the cricket,
The wheat-stack for the mouse,
When tumbling night-winds whistle
And moan all round the house.
The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow,—
Alas! in Winter dead and dark,
Where can poor Robin go?
Robin, robin redbreast,
Oh, Robin dear!
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer.

—Wm. Allingham.

To a Skylark.

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest, which thou canst drop into at will.
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood,—
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine.

Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.
—WORDSWORTH.

The Bobolink.

Bobolink! that in the meadow,
Or beneath the orchard's shadow,
Keepest up a constant rattle
Joyous as the children's prattle,
Welcome to the north again!
Welcome to mine ear thy strain,
Welcome to mine eye the sight
Of thy buff, thy black and white.
Brighter plumes may greet the sun
By the banks of Amazon;
Sweeter tones may weave the spell
Of enchanting Philomel;
But the tropic bird would fail,
And the English nightingale,
If we should compare their worth
With thine endless, gushing mirth.
Bobolink! still may thy gladness
Take from me all taint of sadness,
Fill my soul with trust unshaken
In that Being who has taken
Care for every living thing,
In summer, winter, fall and spring.
—THOMAS HILL.

Doing Its Best.

I am but a tiny cricket,
Living in a summer thicket—
There I take my rest.
Many songs are gayer, prouder;
Many a voice is sweeter, louder—
But I do my best.

In my song there's no complaining
Even when the sky is raining:
Birds fly east and west—
Silent hide in leafy cover;
But I chirp till all is over,
Doing still my best!

The Butterfly's Toilet.

Oh, butterfly, how do you, pray,
Your wings so prettily array?
Where do you find the paints from which
To mix your colors warm and rich?

The butterfly, in answer, said,
"The roses lend me pink and red,
The violets their deepest blue,
And every flower its chosen hue.

"My palette is a rose leaf fair,
My brush is formed of maiden hair,
And dew-drops shining in the grass
Serve nicely for my looking-glass."

—NIXON WATERMAN.

Talking in Their Sleep.

"You think I am dead,"
The apple tree said,
Because I have never a leaf to show,
Because I stoop,
And my branches droop,
And the dull gray moss over me grows.
But I am alive in trunk and shoot,
The buds of next May I fold away,
But I pity the withered grass at my feet."

"You think I am dead,"
The quick grass said,

"Because I have parted with stem and blade:
But under the ground
I am safe and sound,
With the snow's white blanket over me laid.
I am still alive and ready to shoot,
Should the spring of the year
Come dancing here."

Spring's First Call.

Almost time for the pretty white daisies,
Out of their sleep to awaken at last,
And over the meadows, with grasses and clover,
To bud and to blossom, and grow so fast;
Almost time for the buttercups yellow,
The ferns and the flowers, the roses and all,
To waken from slumber, and merrily listen
To gladden our hearts at the spring's first call.

The Spring is Here.

The blue-bird chants from the elm's long branches
A hymn to welcome the budding year;
The south wind wanders from field to forest
And softly whispers, "The spring is here!"

Signs of Spring.

What are the signs of springtime?
Blossoms all a-blow,
Birds in branches lilting rhyme
To the brooks below,
Bobolinks in meadow lands,
Sunshine everywhere,
Swallows circling round in bands
In the upper air.

What are the signs of springtime?
Breezy joyousness,
Songsters from some warmer clime
In their gala dress,
Fragrant odors all around,
Breezes soft and low,
Feet that dance across the ground,
If we will or no.

—FRANK H. SWEET.

Spring Is at Hand.

Would you think it? Spring has come;
Winter's paid his passage home;
Packed his ice-box—gone—half way
To the Arctic pole, they say.
Out of the fields the snowdrops peep;
To work, O land!
Awake, O earth, from the white snow-sleep;
Shake off the coverlet, soft and deep;
Spring is at hand.

—JOHN PAYNE.

Waking.

How soft and warm
This pure white coverlet of snow
Has kept the sleeping earth below
From wintry storm,
Close-fitting, over dale and hill,
Hard-frozen lake and silent rill—
Earth's weary form.

Breathes softly now
A tender sighing from the summer land,
Grass-sandaled herald lays the gentlest hand
On cold damp brow,
Wakes fledgling fancies brooded in their nest,
In snowdrops folded to a loving breast
With loving vow;

Folds back the sheet,
White as of linen bleached in sun and dew,
Looks longingly from eyes of April blue,
With joy to greet
These crocuses that waked beneath the snow,
Hepaticas still sleepy-eyed below,
Close at her feet.

—Isaac Bassett Choate.

Spring Has Come.

Spring has come! Spring has come!
Far over the valley, touching all the hills with green,
Planting the meadows with flowers,
O'er mountain and valley, spring has come.

White old Winter has made up his mind to go,
Taking with him the cold and the frost and snow.
Cometh soft breezes to tell the news,
Sweet-smelling flowers and soft-falling dews.
Spring has come!

The Voice of Spring.

I come, I come! ye have called me long;
I come o'er the mountains, with light and song.
Ye may trace my step o'er the waking earth
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves opening as I pass.

From the streams and founts I have loosed the chain;
They are sweeping on to the silvery main,
They are flashing down from the mountain brows,
They are flinging spray o'er the forest boughs,
They are bursting fresh from their sparry caves,
And the earth resounds with the joy of waves!

—Mrs. Hemans.

The Spring of the Year.

A smile and a tear,
In the spring of the year,
A smile for the summer that's coming;
With bird-trills and flowers,
And long, sunny hours,
And music of wings softly humming.

A smile and a tear,
In the spring of the year,
A tear for the winter that's going;
With dull-colored sky,
And snowflakes that fly,
And blasts for the northland blowing.

—WILLIAM Z. GLADWIN.

Sweet Summer.

Oh! summer is a pleasant time,
With all its sounds and sights,
Its dewy mornings, balmy eves,
And tranquil, calm delights.
I sigh when first I see the leaves
Fall yellow on the plain,
And all the winter long I sing,
"Sweet summer, come again!"

—MARY HOWITT.

Spring Song.

"Awake," said the sunshine, " 'tis time to get up;
Awake, pretty daisy and sweet buttercup;
Why, you've been sleeping the whole winter long!
Hark! hark! don't you hear?
'Tis the blue-bird's first song."

"Awake!" call the streamlets; "we've lain here so still,
And now we must all go to work with a will."
"Wake!" says the warm breeze, "and you, willow tree,
Come, put on your leaves in a twinkling for me!"

"Awake," breathes the air from the blue sky above;
"Awake, for the air is all beauty and love.
Wake, little children, so merry and dear;
Ah! what were the spring, if you were not here!"

A Song of Summer.

A cuckoo sat on a tree and sang,
"Summer is coming, coming;"
And a bee crept out of the hive and began
Lazily humming, humming.

The frogs from out the rushes and reeds,
Into the water went splashing;
And the dragon-fly, with his body of green,
Through the flags went flashing, flashing.

The dormouse put out her head and said,
"Really the sun shines brighter;"
But the butterfly answered, "Not yet, not yet,"
And folded his wings up tighter.

But the thrush and blackbird began to sing
Ever sweeter and sweeter,
And the grasshopper chirped, and hopped and skipped
Ever fleeter and fleeter.

The gnats and the chafers began to buzz:
"We have come from abroad with the summer at last
How lazy you are! What's the matter."

Then the dormouse said, "Summer's really here,
Since the swallows are homeward coming;"
And the butterfly spread out his wings, and the bee
Went louder and louder humming.

And suddenly brighter the sun shone out,
And the clouds away went sailing,
And the sheep nibbled peacefully at the grass,
And the cow looked over the paling.

Yes, summer had come, and the cuckoo sang
His song through woodland and hollow;
"The summer is come; if you don't believe me,
You have only to ask the swallow."

Good-bye, Little Flowers.

Hark! thro' the pine boughs
Cold wails the blast,
Birds south are flying,
Summer is dying,
Flower time is past.

Cold are November skies,
Sunless and drear,
Golden rod, eyelids close,
Aster, tuck up your toes,
Winter is here.

Good-bye, little flowers,
Icy winds sing,
Snow-blankets them over,
Sleep well, little clover,
Sleep till the Spring.

—KATE L. BROWN.

Autumn.

The world puts on its robes of glory now;
The very flowers are tinged with deeper dyes;
The waves are bluer, and the angels pitch
Their shining tents along the sunset skies.

The distant hills are crowned with purple mist;
The days are mellow, and the long, calm nights,
To wondering eyes, like weird magicians show
The shifting splendors of the Northern Lights.

The generous earth spreads out her faithful stores,
And all the leaves are thick with ripened sheaves,
While in the woods, at autumn's rustling step,
The maples blush through all their trembling leaves.

—ALBERT LAIGHTON.

Chestnut Time.

What are these upon the ground,
Dressed in satin jackets brown,
White fur collars, slender neck,
Heads with caps that tassels deck,
Hiding under fallen leaves,
That are scattered by the breeze?
These are chestnuts, brown, you see,
Come to visit you and me.

They've been swinging many days,
Where the birds have sung their lays,
Prickly houses, closed so tight,
They were hidden from our sight,
Till the frost came to their home
And invited them to come,
Spend the winter, share the joys
Of the happy girls and boys.

O, for happy chestnut time,
And the trees we love to climb!
Shake the limbs, the chestnuts fall,
Leaves will try to cover all.
We will find them, but leave more
For the squirrel's winter store.
We'll undo their coats so neat,
Eat the kernels, good and sweet.

—MALANA A. HARRIS.

The Autumn.

The summer is slowly going,
And winter is drawing near;
But what bright time is this before
The dying of the year?
When in meadow, field, and pasture
The purple asters nod,
And the dusty road-side grows so bright
With shining golden-rod?
When the trees put on best dresses,
All fine in yellow and red—
What time so bright can this be,
After summer has gone to bed?

—*Harper's Young People.*

The First Red Leaf.

What is that which the eye perceives
Glowing among the thick green leaves?
Is it an oriole perched to rest,
Or tanager, with his vivid vest?
Or a lonely grosbeak, left behind
Forgotten by all his gorgeous kind?
Alas, for summer—and woe for me—
'Tis the first red leaf on the dogwood-tree!

Ah, why? for the grass is not yet sere;
No blight betokens the failing year;
A late rose reigns on her thorny throne,
All the fairer because alone,
And nods and smiles in the sunny noon,
As sweet and perfect as those of June;
Why hint at winter and storm to be,
O first red leaf on the dogwood-tree?

One orphaned lily leans pale and tall,
Last of its line, by the lichened wall,
The salvia tosses its brilliant plume,
The bright nasturtiums are yet in bloom.

And dahlias, crimson and gold and white
Waste their beauty, awake all night,
Yet here, with its sorrowful prophecy
Is the first red leaf on the dogwood-tree!

The knapweed swings by the meadow path
Where mowers gather the aftermath;
The first pale aster has but begun
To hint that the torrid days are done,
The fringy sprays of the goldenrod
Are spreading their spendthrift wealth abroad,
And while they charm us, we need not see
The first red leaf on the dogwood-tree!

—ELIZABETH AKERS.

Indian Summer.

Again the leaves come fluttering down,
Slowly, silently, one by one,
Scarlet and crimson, and gold and brown,
Willing to fall, for their work is done.

And once again comes the dreamy haze,
Draping the hills with its filmy blue,
And veiling the sun, whose tender rays,
With mellowed light comes shimmering through.

But this dreamy calm, this solemn hush,
The sleeping winds, and the mellow glow,
Only foretell the tempest's rush,
The icy blast, and the whirling snow.

—ELLEN ALLERTON.

Golden Autumn.

Golden Autumn comes again,
With its fields of yellow grain,
With its fields of yellow grain.

Trees bend down with plum and pear,
Rosy apples scent the air,
Nuts are ripening everywhere.

Mouse and ant and squirrel fill
Now their garners at their will,
Only drones need hunger still.

Purple flowers, crimson leaves,
Fruit and flowers, and golden sheaves,
Autumn gives us ere she leaves.

—MRS. HAWTREY.

Autumn's Work.

I have painted the woods, I have kindled the sky,
I have brightened the hills with a glance of mine eye;
I have scattered the fruits, I have gathered the corn,
And now from the earth must her verdure be torn.

No more from the depth of the grove may be heard
The joy-burdened song of the fluttering bird;
I have passed o'er the branches that sheltered him there,
And their quivering drapery is shaken to air.

I call on the winds that repose in the north,
To send their wild voices in unison forth;
Let the harp of the tempest be dolefully strung—
There's a wail to be made, there's a dirge to be sung.

The First Snow.

Over the meadows bare and brown
The wee white flakes came fluttering down.
Over the tops of leafless trees,
Hurrying, flurrying, on the breeze,
Hither, and thither, and to and fro
Whirled and glimmered the flakes of snow.

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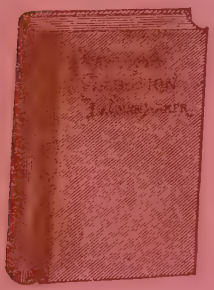

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